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SUBJECT: Return Mars Sample Study

I expressed to him my concern that any resources were being devoted to such a study (referring only to the Mars return sample segment of the study). Even optimistic projections of the knowledge of the planet that will be obtained from prior US missions ('69, '71, and '73) could not justify the planning of such a mission for 1975. Even a few thousand dollars spent in this coming fiscal year on such a study, in competition with the pressing near term needs of the '71 and '73 missions, postpones further into the future the time when we would have enough information to justify carrying out such a mission. Such a mission would have to be preceded by a more elaborate lander than is contemplated in '73. It is therefore not cost effective to devote any resources to its study now - it is, in fact, counter-productive.

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